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THE WILL AND THE AFFECTIONS.

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SERMON

PREPARED FOR THE ORDINATION

OF

MR. RICHARD PIKE,

OVER THE

THIRD RELIGIOUS SOCIETY IN DORCHESTER, MASS.

FEBRUARY 8, 1843.

By ANDREW P. PEABODY,
PASTOR OF THE SOUTH CHURCH, PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE.

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The delivery of this Sermon was prevented by unavoidable causes of detention on the Eastern Rail-road. Rev. Mr. Lothrop, of Boston, kindly consented to preach on the occasion; but has declined giving a copy of his Sermon for publication. The manuscript of this Sermon is yielded for the press, with unfeigned reluctance, at the urgent and repeated request of the Committee of the Society.

Rev. Mr. Whitman was prevented by the same causes from delivering the Charge; and his place in the ordination services was supplied by Rev. Mr. Gannett, of Boston.

SERMON.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 13.

"I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHICH STRENGTHENETH ME."

Our views of the extent of human ability necessarily lie at the basis of our theology. We look to religion to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We regard religion as the complement of human nature,—as that, which is necessary to finish the human temple in undying perfectness and beauty. What seems to us wanting in the temple as it stands, we seek to supply from records or sources of religious faith. Hence, if we think too meanly of man's nature and native ability, we lumber our theology with excessive and superfluous doctrines. If, on the other hand, we in any wise over-estimate man's nature and ability, in that same proportion our theology becomes defective and meagre, our respect for revelation declines, and our sense of the need and worth of religion fades away.

Now two opposite views, equally erroneous, as it seems to me, have for many centuries divided the christian world, leaving but few on the middle ground of truth and

soundness. The motto of the one party has been, "I can do nothing,"—that of the other, "I can do all things." On the one hand, man's utter moral inability, on the other, the unlimited freedom of the human will, has been maintained and defended. The former was the reigning heresy from Augustine till a century after the Reformation; the latter has been gradually supplanting it in Protestant Christendom. Neither is the doctrine of consciousness or experience; neither is the doctrine of the Scriptures or of the Primitive Church. But the confession of genuine christian experience, the testimony of the purest and best of all times, the voice of martyrs, confessors and apostles, is, "I can of mine own self do nothing; but I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

I ask your attention to the bearing upon christian theology of these several views of human nature. I hope, by means of this discussion, to illustrate the true design and office of the christian ministry, and thus to meet the demands of the occasion, which has called us together.

The doctrine of man's moral inability need not detain us long; for we are probably in no danger of embracing it, and those sects of Christians that have adhered to it are fast changing their ground, and, as men generally vibrate from one extreme to another, will, it is to be feared, make trial of the shallowness of rationalism, before they settle upon a sufficient and satisfying faith.

A belief in man's utter moral inability leads to the adoption of arbitrary schemes of redemption, in which man is represented as passive, and as having the whole work done for him, instead of "working out his own salvation with fear and trembling." In the dark ages, and in the Roman Church, man's salvation was professedly wrought out by ceremonies and outward ordinances, which were supposed, not to owe their efficacy to the

christian faith or purpose of him who used them, but to possess an intrinsic, talismanic virtue, affixing the signature of complete redemption to those who complied with them, without reference to character. The rites of the Church labelled a certain portion of mankind for heaven; and all, of whatever spirit, who would apply, might be labelled, while those, who were not thus labelled, were suffered to sink into perdition. We have indeed read and heard much of the Romish doctrine of human merit, and of those possessed of merit to such a superabundant degree, as to cancel other sins and save other souls besides their own. But the merit of the Romish Church is ritual, not moral merit. Merit appertains to him, who, by rigid compliance with the rites of the Church, has procured himself to be labelled as a candidate for heaven; and those, whose superfluous merits go into the treasury of the Church, gain the power of saving other souls by abounding, not in good works, but in masses, fasts, penances and pilgrimages, and thus multiplying labels, which the Church, in the plenitude of her authority, may affix to those, whose ritual merit falls short of the prescribed standard.

In more enlightened ages, and in the Reformed Church, the idea of man's moral inability has found expression in the doctrines of predestination, sovereign, constraining grace, and arbitrary election,—a system, according to which some are made "vessels of wrath," and others "vessels of mercy," without reference to their moral efforts or dispositions, or, to borrow its own technical phraseology, "without foresight of faith or good works," all that is good in the human heart or character resulting from God's arbitrary decree.

From the bosom of the Reformed Church, reposing in the paralytic slumber induced by a religious system, which left the human soul nothing to do, sprang Armin-

ianism, which took a bold leap to the opposite extreme of doctrine, maintaining the entire freedom of the human will in every separate effort of volition, the unlimited power of choice in every instance, so that all that a man needs, in order to do right, is to have the right way set before him, and fortified by sufficient sanctions. According to this theory, all that we need in religion is a law clearly set forth, and sanctions of reward and punishment fully defined. Hence those representations of Christianity, which regard it as addressed solely to the reason, as exhibiting the tendencies of different actions and courses of conduct, and the certainty of a righteous retribution, and then leaving man to make free choice for himself. This is a very partial and low view of Christianity, and one, which makes a large portion of its records unessential and worthless. It assigns no place or office to the paternal character of God, to the beauty of holiness in the Saviour's life, to the cross or the intercession of Jesus. If law and its sanctions are all that man needs, these might as well have been uttered by a voice from heaven, as drawn out in the divine life and sealed by the reconciling blood of Christ, and such a gospel as might have been promulgated amidst the thunders of a second Sinai, would have been not one whit less precious than that which flowed from a suffering Redeemer.

Moreover, the promulgation of law and its sanctions is not a distinctive office of Christianity, but one, which it performs in common with the light of nature, the arrangements of providence, and the records of human history and experience; and, though the perfect law comes to us through Jesus alone, it returns to us from nature and the human heart with so clear, prolonged and manifold an echo, that we are in danger of mistaking the echo for the voice that first spake. With these low views then of the office of Christianity, we can hardly help losing our pecu-

liar and distinctive reverence for it. We easily learn to look upon it as a mere republication or codification of the law and religion of nature, not above the scope of human genius, and therefore not needing the marvellous apparatus of miracle and prophecy to establish and authenticate it. The next step, (and an obvious and natural one,) in this rationalizing process is to regard the miraculous portions of the gospel narrative, and the more than human beauty and glory that rested upon Jesus, as the mere mythological drapery, in which men's superstitious fancies have wrapped the simple form of truth. The way is now open for the arrogant rejection of a positive faith, and the bold and scornful denial of that resurrection, of which the great apostle's testimony was: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain; yea, and we are found false witnesses of God." And think not that a theology thus destructive can long retain even a nominal connexion with the revealed word. The Bible is as a millstone about its neck, impedes its freedom, checks its progress, and must be thrown away as both useless and cumbersome.

Such has in fact been the degenerate path of Arminian theology. The last step alone remains to be taken; and would to God that it were even now taken, and the Bible frankly, honestly, and in express terms, rejected by those, who can cast ridicule and scorn upon its most touching and sacred pages!

Many of us have felt and deplored the rationalistic tendency of theology among our clergy and churches. It has its origin in a false philosophy of the human will. We have not fully perceived and felt the want, the need, the infirmity of man; and therefore have had inadequate ideas of the richness and perfectness of the gospel dispensation. The word of God through his prophet has been verified in us: "They have healed the hurt of the daugh-

ter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." And this has been because we have had no idea of the extent or depth of "the hurt." We have had vague and superficial notions of the disease of sin; and have therefore failed to discern and apply its true and sufficient remedy. Our ignorance of the wound has left much of the balm in Gilead ungathered, many of the functions of the great Physician unrecognized. For there is a deeper moral disease than ignorance or indifference. We may know our duty, may see it written before us with its eternal sanctions in letters of flame, nay, may feel most thrillingly the curse and penalty of violated law; and yet we may lack power to keep the law. There is an infirmity of the will, which, more than aught else, needs the aid of religion and the strength of Christ, and which it is Christ's peculiar mission to heal. It has been the vicious defect of Arminian theology, to overlook this infirmity of the will, which is at once a doctrine of scripture, and a fact in the uniform experience and observation of mankind.

It is a doctrine constantly recognized in scripture. Jesus says, "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." St. Paul, in a passage in which he describes the conscious experience of every aspirant for moral goodness, says: "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me; for I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." In the same connexion, he tells the disciples at Rome, that Christ came, not simply to reveal or confirm the law, but to do for man, "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." The same apostle, in bidding his converts to work out their own salvation, assures them: "It is God

which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

But we learn the infirmity of the human will not from the revealed word alone. The word is nigh us, in our mouths, and in our hearts. Unrecognized as it has been in our theology, it enters into the common speech, and forms a part of the remembered experience of all of us.

Let us look at some of the indications of this infirmity of the will. Let us then ascertain in what human freedom actually consists. The inquiry will lend us essential aid in fixing our views of christian theology, and in showing us, who are ministers of the word, how we may preach a gospel, which may meet men's wants and save their souls.

I remember once talking with a person, who had hardly any other bad habit, on the habit of sarcastic and contemptuous speech; and the reply was: "I know that it is wrong to talk thus,—I hardly ever say any thing of the kind without knowing at the time that it is wrong; but I enjoy it, and, when an occasion comes in my way for holding any one up to ridicule, I feel that I have not the command of my own will,—it is not in my power to resist the temptation." I quote this confession as a specimen of the kind of confession, which almost every one of us would be constrained to make with regard to his easily besetting sins. The man, who in any way overreaches or defrauds his neighbor, knows his guilt and its penalty, and yet lacks energy of will to refrain from it. The wanton slanderer knows that he is at once dealing about him, and kindling in his own spirit, the very fire of hell; yet he cannot will to quench it. He, on whose unmitigated wrath the sun, and many, many suns go down, even if his sin were at first sudden and without consciousness of guilt, has made it by continuance a sin of reflection and of choice, from which his will cannot release itself.

He, who is now the bond-slave of appetite, became so perhaps without being at the outset aware of his guilt; but soon his vicious indulgences grew so gross, that he could no longer hide from himself their sinfulness, and the fearful retribution that awaits them. He now knows what he does, and knows whither he is hastening; but has no strength of will to retrace his steps. There are multitudes also, who take their first step in a career of vice with the full consciousness of the vicious character and fatal issues of the path on which they are entering, yet cannot set their wills against the current of temptation. The piously educated young man, who yields for the first time to the enticement of dissolute companions, is as sure at that moment, as he will be at the day of judgment, that he is sinning against God and his own soul; but his will is lame, — he cannot keep his feet from the way of transgressors. Almost every one will be ready to own, with regard to some one habit of his life: "I know that I ought to forsake it, but I have not the resolution so to do." Our omissions of duty also are often omissions of acknowledged duty: the call of duty is distinctly heard, — conscience echoes it; but there is as it were a contraction of the inward ear, a shutting out of the unwelcome sound from the region of our resolves and purposes. There are duties, which we deliberately recognize as duties, and confess that we are fully capable of discharging them; but they come in conflict with a stubborn will, and are left unperformed. Indeed, those of us, who profess the faith and obedience of the gospel, are prone to take for our standard of character, not that of our knowledge or capacity, but that of a lame, indolent and self-indulgent will. We say to ourselves: "I will be content to reach such or such a degree of excellence, and in these and those respects to discharge my whole duty. I know indeed that my Saviour's example reaches

vastly higher, that many of his followers have been much more conscientious and faithful, and that I have within me as large powers of duty, obedience and moral attainment, as any man has. But I have no will to do more or better. I can muster no strength of resolution for the effort to become among the chief and the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

This then is man's great infirmity and disease,—a suspension of the power of right volition. I call it both an infirmity and a disease. It is an infirmity, so far as it is native,—an infirmity, for which in religion God has furnished ample remedies, in accordance with that beautiful law and harmony of nature, by which want and supply correspond to each other throughout the universe of matter and of mind. It grows into a disease stubborn and malignant, when suffered to go unremedied, by the same law, by which every native deficiency, which we may supply and do not, becomes a prolific source of positive evil and sin.

But you ask, Is not the human will then free? Let me ask, in reply, Is your will free? You do what you will,—do you do all that you know to be essential for the discharge of your duty, and for the attainment of your highest good? Or do you not in some respects see the right, and yet the wrong pursue? And, if so, will you call your will free? The will, which appetite intoxicates, which mammon bribes, which resentment arms with poisoned arrows,—do you call that will free? The will, which in the best of us sloth often binds, and habit makes a pliant slave,—has even Christ made it wholly free?

Still man is a free agent. But the seat of his moral freedom lies far behind those separate volitions that make up his daily life. Over these separate volitions we have, as I have shown you, no sure control. They obey the law, they follow the bent of the character. The will is

but a secondary principle of the moral nature,—the soul's executive functionary,—not, as is commonly imagined, self-determining and independent. The will is not the character, but only the expression of it. In a moral point of view, volition and action are coincident; and men's actions, and the volitions from which they spring, are bound, not indeed by any eternal decree of an arbitrary God, but by a necessity, which is the shadow of themselves,—by a necessity, for which they themselves are accountable. When we say that man is a free agent, we do not mean that he can escape the influence of motives; but that he can make choice among the various classes of motives. This choice, however, he seldom, perhaps never makes at the moment of final volition. He makes it in his seasons of retirement, reflection and reverie, in the day-dreams of youth, in the breathing-spells of business, in the intervals of pursuit or enjoyment. It is then that the spirits come and go at his bidding. Appetite, passion, gain, the love of Jesus, the will of God, all present themselves as master principles of action, as the main-springs of life. Those that he dismisses return less and less frequently, and offer themselves with fainter and fainter voices. Those that he welcomes remain with him, go forth with him into active life, and constrain him to will and to do of their good pleasure. Thus the times, when we exert our moral freedom, are what we call the least active seasons of our lives. The times, when we can say, "I will," and our word is with power, are times, when we are unconscious of any effort of volition. The true effort of our free agency is not in those great emergencies, those outward crises, when we seem to summon up all our inward energy; but it is in that still small voice, nay, that silent gesture of the soul, with which we beckon near or wave away the phantoms of good or evil. We are free then in our choice of motives. And what is

motive? It is but another name for love. Paradoxical as the words may sound, it is our love that is free. It may attach itself to what or to whom we will. It has no law but that of familiar contemplation or intercourse. It attaches itself to the most loathsome and hateful objects when made familiar. It detaches itself from objects however lovely or attractive, when for any reason we shun them, or leave them unthought of. Thus, in another sense than that of its supreme importance, is the commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," the first commandment. It is the easiest, it must be the first in order of time, and no other commandment of religious duty can be obeyed as such, till this is obeyed. The affections govern the will, and control the life. Out of the abundance of the heart flow those purposes and volitions, which determine the conduct. The affections, then, must furnish the remedy for the infirm and diseased will. Religious love must strengthen and sanctify the will, and convert its lameness for all that is good into a blessed necessity of holy living, of duty and of progress.

Now, in man's unregenerate state, his will is lame, because his love is cold. There is one conclusive indication that the infirmity of the will flows from the lack of love. It is this: There is none of this infirmity, and no voluntary guilt towards the objects of a confessedly strong affection. No affectionate husband or father deliberately and voluntarily wounds the feelings, sacrifices the happiness, or neglects the well-being of his wife or children. On the other hand, how common is it to see men, who are unfair in their out of door dealings, ungenerous towards those not of their own households, unfaithful in public trusts, yet in all domestic cares and kindnesses exemplary and perfect, because in their own homes they love as they ought to! You, my friends, who see much

towards God and man of duty, which you have had no energy of will to perform, and of transgression, which you have had no energy of will to resist, can yet look back upon no willing sin towards those under your own roof. There may indeed have been occasional bursts of anger or of peevishness,—there may have been instances of gross negligence,—there may be particular forms of care for their moral and religious good, to which you have been blind; but these have been sins of impulse, of surprise, or of utter forgetfulness or ignorance. You never say to yourselves: "I ought to do this to make my wife happy, but I will not do it,"—"I owe this to my children's characters and prospects, yet I will not make the effort or the sacrifice,"—"I see very plainly what my family needs and demands of me, but I will content myself with something very far short of this." Is it not clear then, that if, through the infirmity of your will, you fail to discharge your duties to the great family of man, and to God, their Father and your Father, it must be from lack of love to man and of love to God?

These considerations exhibit in strong light the shallowness of that rationalistic view of Christianity, already spoken of, which recognizes law and its sanctions, as the only essential elements of the Gospel. Law, of itself, is weak. A religion of mere law might instruct men; but could not urge or restrain them. He, who can preach nothing more than this, might as well preach among the tombs, as to living men. Those, who regard Christianity solely in this light, can hardly rise above a low average standard of duty. I doubt whether you can point to a single instance, in which one, who has thus regarded the gospel, has made any great effort or sacrifice for its sake. Philanthropists, missionaries, martyrs, have never had a purely rational religion. Nor did a purely rational religion ever save a sufferer from repining, or fix a widow's or an orphan's heart in resignation and implicit trust.

Christianity is indeed a rational system, inasmuch as it excludes all mysticism and all absurdity, and teaches nothing, to which the reason yields not cordial assent. But it does much more than appeal to the reason. The peculiar sway of the Gospel is over the affections. The way, in which it seeks to control and sanctify the will, is indicated by the apostles in passages like these: "The love of Christ constraineth us;"—"If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another;"—"He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them." The object of the whole Gospel economy is to fasten the affections, the gratitude, and the confidence of the human heart upon God and Jesus, and, through these omnipotent principles of action, to strengthen man's will for every effort and sacrifice that personal or social duty may demand. It is thus that the preaching of "Jesus Christ, and him crucified," has been made all-powerful, insomuch that the spiritual well-being and growth of the Church have always borne a close proportion to the fidelity, with which the cross has been set forth as the great reconciling agent. It has been men constrained by the love of Christ, and such only, that have offered up their all, and not counted their lives dear, if in hardship, suffering and death, they might only win souls to Jesus. Read the history of those indefatigable and holy men, the French missionaries, who first bore the banner of the cross among the wigwams of our western wilderness, and gathered into the fold of Christ the wild wanderers of the forest. Numerous were the times, when, their little christian settlements being attacked by hostile tribes, they themselves might have escaped. But they would remain behind, to perform to the last every office of christian love for the wounded and the dying, and, while themselves expiring under the slow torture of Indian barbarity, gashed all over with

wounds, they would still pour forth, till the last gasp, the consolations of the Gospel to their fellow-sufferers, or expend all the energies of a dying man in telling their murderers of their Father and their Redeemer. And of all these martyr spirits it is recorded, that the love of Jesus was their unfailing theme of contemplation and discourse, that their solitary hours were spent in prayer and meditation by the cross, and that the thought, which sustained them, and urged them on to certain death, was, "He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

What we need, to strengthen our infirm wills, and to inspire us to meet promptly the utmost demands of duty, is a love like that, with which those great men of God were filled,—a constraining love of our Savior and our Father. This need is amply met and supplied in the New Testament. How full is it throughout of the closest, the most imperative appeals to our affections! Under how many tender and endearing images does it represent our heavenly Parent, as the compassionate shepherd, ranging the mountain pastures, to bring back the one wanderer to the fold,—as the kind father, going forth to fall upon the neck of the returning prodigal,—as calling upon all heaven to rejoice over the single repenting sinner;—then, too, while he thus cares for man's spiritual good, as stooping to the least details of his outward estate, nay, more, as upholding the wayfaring sparrow, and painting the lily's cup! How nigh does Jesus bring the Father, as closer to man's heart than even his own plans and purposes, as perpetually waiting at the door of the human soul, with his counselling and guiding spirit, as watching for the first faint sigh of contrition, the first half-framed desire for inward light and peace!

Then, too, as how much more than a mere teacher is Jesus presented to us, as personally our friend and bene-

factor, — as one, who loved us and gave himself for us, who took upon himself the lowliest form and fortunes of earth, who bowed upon the cross, and expired in agony, that you, and I, and every one might look upon that cross, and say, "Herein is love!" And then, Jesus is set forth as still our intercessor and helper. While we forget him, he forgets not us. In our worldliness and our guilt, his prayer goes up for us, his aid is proffered to us, his eye looks down upon us with ineffable pity and love.

It is these portions of the Gospel, which it has become so common of late to regard and treat as not essential or permanent; and among those, who reverence the whole Gospel, as we have it, there has been too great a readiness to concede these points as of secondary moment. But if an infirm will be man's chief moral disease, then are those features of the Gospel, which set forth in the strongest relief the love of God and of Jesus, its most prominent and essential features. To my mind they constitute the peculiar excellence, the crowning glory of the Gospel. They furnish religion with its motive-power. They supply what man most of all needs, — something to bind his affections to the infinite and the heavenly. A religion of mere law would have been impotent, in proportion to its perfectness. The higher its standard of duty and obedience, the more paralyzing would it have been to the infirm will of man. "The law was given by Moses;" but it was not enough till "mercy and truth met together," and together became incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. By law alone is "the knowledge of sin," and the consciousness of weakness; but, when the love of Jesus dawns upon the heart, its language is, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

If the train of thought, in which I have now led you, be just, it makes the awakening and the cultivation of the religious affections the first and chief aim to be had in

view, in the preaching of the Gospel. Brethren in the ministry, would you furnish and strengthen the souls committed to your charge for lives of duty and of piety? Bring them then into that intimate, familiar communion with God and Jesus, in which love may have its birth. Do you see them living as those, who have no love for God? Fix then their thoughts upon the multiplied tokens of his mercy. Trace out for them his smile in nature and in the daily path of their pilgrimage. Above all, show them, as having yourselves beheld it with adoring admiration, "the glory of God in the face of Jesus." Do you see them indifferent to the emblems, and seemingly strangers to the power of their Saviour's love? Bring home then the scenes of his life to their distinct view. Take them with you to the gates of Nain, to the young maiden's death-chamber, to the sepulchre of Lazarus. Let them often go with you to the lone mountain of the Redeemer's midnight supplication, to the garden of his agony. Paint for them with intense, earnest enthusiasm the benignant, godlike features of his spirit. Bow with them at the foot of the cross. There teach them to love. There strive to convert their languor into zeal, their coldness into a glowing fervour of soul. And then direct their vision to that unslumbering eye of interceding love, which looks on them from the heavens; and open their inward ear to the accents of that prayer, which flows for them at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Thus will you send your hearers home to meditate and pray. Thus, through your ministry, may they be inspired by a love, which shall subdue their wills, sanctify their lives, and save their souls.

I have thus set forth what seems to me the great moral infirmity to be healed by the preaching of the Gospel, and the mode in which we, who preach the word, are to heal this infirmity. Our great work is to set forth the love of

God in Christ Jesus. This is our peculiar province as christian ministers, and must ever be kept in view as the one aim, to which all others are to be made subservient. In this work we stand alone. In preaching law and its sanctions, we occupy no higher ground than the Rabbies of the ancient church. In performing the rites and administering the ordinances of the sanctuary, we stand upon the same platform with priests of every age and of every religion. What is peculiarly entrusted to us is "the ministry of reconciliation,—God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." We then, as "ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech men by us," are to pray them "in Christ's stead," by his love, and by God's love in him, to be "reconciled to God." Thus, preaching in love the mediation, the cross, the intercession of Jesus, we may, by the divine blessing, realize for not a few of the souls, for whom he died, the apostle's prayer for his Thessalonian converts, which we would breathe anew for the shepherd and the flock, united by the solemnities of this day. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

CHARGE.

BY REV. JASON WHITMAN.

My Friend and Brother,—

To me has been assigned the office, on this occasion, of presenting to you, in the form of a Charge, such hints in regard to the duties of the Ministerial and Pastoral relation, as my experience and observation may have suggested. In doing this, I would say distinctly, that I do not claim in behalf of the Ecclesiastical Council, in whose name I speak, any authority over you, or any right, on our part, to dictate in regard to the opinions you may embrace and preach, or the modes of ministerial labor you may adopt. In all your studies, in all your labors, you will cherish the feeling that you are accountable, not to any human authority, but simply to your own conscience and your God. You will not ask what this or that man may believe, in what manner this or that clergyman may conduct his ministerial and pastoral labors, with any other view than for the purpose of gathering hints, to aid you in your own efforts to arrive at a more full comprehension of the truth as it is in Jesus, and to adapt more successfully your labors to your circumstances. You will, with singleness of purpose, ever seek for truth, ever follow duty. But while I disclaim all authority over you, I would indulge the hope that you will kindly receive the

suggestions in regard to the duties of the office you this day take upon you, which, in the exercise of sincere friendship, I shall frankly offer.

And now, my brother, will you fix your mind's eye distinctly upon the position you are hereafter to occupy in the community? You are to stand up in this place, and before this people, you are to go forth in this community, not merely as a man of literature and science, not merely as a philosopher or a philanthropist, but as an ambassador of Christ, a herald of the Cross, a preacher of the Gospel. First, then, direct your attention to your position as a preacher. What shall you preach? Look at the congregation of your hearers. There may be among them the wealthy, the learned, the fashionable. But they are all sinners before God, and, unless they become reconciled to him through Christ Jesus, are exposed to the dread consequences of their transgression of his holy laws. And neither will their wealth, their learning, or their fashion, save them from sin, or from its unhappy consequences. "There is," saith the apostle, "salvation in none other than Christ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Then look at yourself. As a literary or scientific man, you have your own opinions upon the philosophical speculations of the day. But you have felt yourself a sinner before God, and you have found that no literary or scientific attainments, that no opinions upon philosophical speculations, have been to you the power of God unto salvation, the instruments of your regeneration and spiritual renewal of heart. For this, you are indebted to the power of gospel truth, and the influences of God's holy spirit. You will then preach to others, that which has been the power of God unto salvation to yourself. And as an ambassador of Christ, you will, with Paul, determine not to know any thing among your people, save Jesus Christ

and him crucified. You will not enter this place, that you may interest and entertain your hearers with your own philosophical speculations; that you may exhibit yourself, your talents and learning. You will seek to awaken your hearers to a deep interest in spiritual things, and, when you have done so, to bring them to Jesus,—and there you will leave them, to gather, from their communion with him, that spiritual strength, of which you have found such communion a prolific source. You will not be over-anxious to present new, striking, and startling views, but will direct your hearers to Christ, as not only the author, but the finisher of our faith. Nor will you want variety in your topics of discourse. In rightly dividing the word of truth, you will look again at the assembly of your hearers. There are among them the careless and the indifferent, who are to be aroused; there are the timid to be encouraged, the doubting and inquiring to be guided, the ignorant to be instructed, the afflicted to be consoled, and those, who are pressing on after high attainments in the divine life, to be aided in their course. You will seek to bring a word in season, as occasion may require, to each of these classes. You will, at one time, present the solemn truths of the Gospel; at another you will urge its soul-stirring appeals. Now you will present the animating disclosures, and now the consoling hopes, and soul-sustaining promises of the Gospel. You will seek to reach the conscience, to warm the heart, to influence the conduct. You will then preach Christ, in all the variety of manifestations, in which he has become unspeakably dear to your own soul. You will strive to interest your hearers, not merely in yourself, but in Christ, and in yourself only that you may exert the more influence in leading them to him,—in persuading them to consecrate themselves to the service of God, in a life of obedience to the instructions of Jesus.

How shall you preach? Look again at the Gospel in its relation to your own soul. It is to you the very life of your spiritual man, the source of your highest present joy, the foundation of all your hopes for eternity. Consider what you yourself would be without the Gospel, deprived of its instructions, its promises, its hopes. When you have dwelt upon this view until your whole heart is alive, when you have mused until the fire burns within you, then look upon your brothers or your sisters, the companions of your early years, bound to you by the strong ties of affection, but who yet have no deep interest in spiritual things, no conscious experience of the power of gospel truth upon their hearts, who are strangers to its peace-giving, soul-sustaining promises; consider, too, that they are frail and mortal, liable at any moment to be cut off by death from the christian privileges which they now enjoy, and that your present may be your last opportunity to speak to them upon any subject. Dwell upon this view until your heart yearns for their spiritual regeneration, until you can scarce restrain yourself from pouring out your soul to God in prayer for them, that they may be saved. In this state of feeling, frame, in your own mind, an address to them in behalf of religion, in behalf of their own souls, their spiritual and eternal welfare. If, under such circumstances, and in such a state of feeling, you were to address a letter to a brother or a sister, upon the subject of religion, would it not be simple, direct and earnest, but, at the same time, kind and affectionate? If, under such circumstances, and in such a state of feeling, you were to speak to a brother or a sister, upon the subject of religion, it would not be in pompous and hollow declamation,—it would not be in a dull, prosy, formal manner. No. You would speak with direct and affectionate earnestness. But the congregation are your brethren and sisters,—many of them, it may be, utterly indifferent

to spiritual things: others, anxiously inquiring what they shall do to be saved; others, still, asking for spiritual food, that their souls may grow in christian graces. Then, too, they are frail and mortal. Each discourse you deliver may be to some of them the last they will hear on earth. You, too, are frail and mortal. Each discourse you preach, you will feel, may be your last. The sabbath dawns; you have sought, by study and by prayer, to prepare for its approach. You will feel that it is one of the most important seasons that can be enjoyed. To yourself, as an ambassador of Christ, it is important, affording you an opportunity for advancing the Redeemer's kingdom. To your hearers, as spiritual beings, it is important, affording them an opportunity to establish and build up the kingdom of God in their own hearts. You will then speak to them as a brother, with all a brother's affectionate entreaty, with all a brother's earnest remonstrance, but as a brother, to whom the Gospel is dearer than life, and desirous that they too should have sweet experience of all the purifying, elevating, life-giving influences, which you have yourself derived from this never-failing fountain. You will strive so to speak, that your hearers, when they retire, shall think not so much of the man or the manner, as of God, his law, and his love,—of Christ, his labors, instructions, and sufferings—of themselves, their natures and destinies,—their obligations and duties,—their sins and deficiences. You will strive so to speak, that your hearers shall retire, not to praise the preacher, but to pray for themselves. If, then, you ask what and how you shall preach, my answer is one and the same,—seek to become so absorbed in the truths of the christian religion, and in the spiritual interests of your flock, as to forget yourself. Preach Christ, as one who would win souls, and then will you so preach, as to approve yourself to your own conscience, and your God.

But a christian minister is not only a preacher, he is also a pastor. Direct your thoughts then, in the second place, to your position as a pastor. Your pastoral labors lie principally in your week-day visits to the people of your charge. And what should be the object, at which you should aim in these parochial calls? Pastoral visiting should not be merely social visiting. This may be necessary at first, and until you become in some degree acquainted with your people. For they must feel acquainted with you before they can speak to you freely upon religious subjects. But you will regard even this mere social visiting as preliminary and preparatory to something higher, and more important. Nor is pastoral visiting to become parlour preaching, where the minister delivers a set and formal discourse. Nor yet is it to be regarded simply as an opportunity where you may talk over parish matters or denominational prospects. I may be peculiar in my views, but I regard parochial visiting as important, especially, because it affords the pastor an opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with the precise state of feelings, upon the subject of religion, of the people of his charge. As a christian minister, what more important to you, than a knowledge of the states of feeling among your people upon the subject of religion, that you may know how to meet them, and so become to them a more efficient preacher? If any are indifferent, you wish to know the causes of their indifference, or the particular form which, in each individual case, it may assume, so that you may know how to arouse them. If any are inquiring or doubting, you wish to know the precise point of their inquiries, the particular doubts by which they are troubled, so that you may the more easily guide them in the way of truth. This knowledge you can acquire only by free social religious communion with them. And the importance of this will appear from the

thought, that, as you are thus free in your religious communion, you may often, in a few moments' conversation, remove doubts, which you might not reach in the public discourses of a whole year. Bear it in mind, then, that the principal object of pastoral visiting is to become intimately acquainted with the state of feeling among your parishioners upon the subject of religion, in order that you may the better meet their religious wants in your private conversations, and in your public discourses.

But how is this object to be accomplished? Here is, I fear, the point where we fail. We feel the importance of the object, we earnestly desire to accomplish it. And yet the result of our efforts does not answer our expectations or satisfy our desires. We have this intimate spiritual acquaintance with some few of our parishioners; and with them our pastoral intercourse is delightful and profitable, profitable to them, profitable to ourselves. But is not the number with whom we have such intercourse too limited? I fear that we are too timid in introducing the subject of religion in our private calls. I well remember that, when I entered the christian ministry, I felt that my parishioners, regarding me as a christian minister, and having reason to suppose that I should be glad to converse with them upon the subject of religion, would, of their own accord, open their hearts to me, and make known to me their feelings, their interest, their doubts and anxieties; but my own experience has taught me that it is not so. Even with those, who are deeply interested upon the subject of religion, and who are in reality longing to speak with their pastor in regard to their feelings, there is often a degree of diffidence and a delicate sensitiveness, which will prevent them from speaking of their own accord. Then, too, they regard this as a part of the minister's appropriate duty. They hear him urging upon their attention from the pulpit the importance

of religion, and they expect that, when he may call upon them during the week, he will speak to them upon the same subject. But it is not enough to speak in general terms upon the subject; direct interrogatories, in regard to their particular interest and peculiar feelings, are often necessary. Let me relate a single incident from my own ministerial experience. On a certain occasion I questioned a lady of my congregation, kindly, but directly and earnestly, in regard to the state of her mind and feelings upon the subject of religion; she was deeply interested, and needed but a word of counsel and encouragement to induce her to make an open profession of her faith. As I afterwards met her, she asked me how I happened to speak to her upon the subject, at the time and in the manner I did. For, said she, I had been longing for months to speak with you upon the subject of religion, and especially to make known to you my newly and deeply awakened feelings; but such were the difficulties I found in the way, that I should have gone to my grave without ever having done so, had you not directly questioned me upon the subject. I had seen that lady frequently during those months, had conversed with her upon other topics, and even upon the subject of religion had we conversed in general terms. But I had not spoken to her directly in regard to the interest which she herself felt in the subject. I mention this incident, simply as an illustration of what I believe to be the very general feeling of our parishioners upon this subject. The great majority of them will never introduce the subject of their own religious interest themselves. They expect their pastor to speak to them, and they will wait for this. This is one view of the subject; take another. If you were to come to this place as the agent of the Peace Society, or any similar benevolent association, and were to spend a few weeks in calling round upon the people, you would

introduce the subject directly, you would speak of its importance in general terms, and then you would converse freely with those, on whom you might call, in regard to their views, opinions and feelings in relation to it. And you would do this, in order to know better how to meet their peculiar state of feelings, either in your public addresses or your private conversations. You would not converse always upon the particular subject of your agency, you would not introduce it abruptly at improper times and places, you would converse freely and pleasantly upon the various topics that might arise; but you would not forget that you were an agent of a benevolent association. You would be constantly on the watch for appropriate opportunities, on which to introduce the subject, and advance the interests of the association whose agent you were. And is not this an appropriate illustration? You come to this place as an agent of the Gospel, of that benevolent association and institution, which commenced with Jesus Christ and his apostles. Your object therefore should be to promote the interests of the Gospel, to advance the Redeemer's kingdom. As you go about among your people, you will show yourself the intelligent and kind-hearted gentleman, and, as such, you will converse freely and socially upon the various common topics of the day. But you will not forget that you are a herald of the Gospel, an ambassador of the Cross. You will, therefore, watch for all appropriate opportunities to introduce religious conversation. And when these opportunities occur, you will not only speak of the importance of religion in general terms, but will seek to ascertain precisely the degree of interest your parishioners may feel upon the subject, the peculiar doubts and difficulties they may have met with, the particular counsel, encouragement or instruction they may need. And let me assure you, my brother, that pastoral visiting, if it aim at the

object and is conducted upon the principle suggested, will become, both to yourself and to the people of your charge, a source of pleasure and of profit. You will acquire an intimate acquaintance with the religious condition and wants of your people. Your soul will be refreshed, as you go among them, by free and holy spiritual communion, and you will be aided in the selection of subjects for your discourses adapted to their peculiar wants. Your people will value your visits as seasons of spiritual refreshing, will look forward to them with heartfelt interest, and back upon them with great satisfaction. They will be strengthened in their purposes and helped onward in their course by your conversations, and will be prepared by them for listening more profitably to your public instructions.

Finally, my brother, as you look abroad upon the community in which you are placed, you will see some who are vicious and abandoned; these you will wish to reclaim. You will see others, who are only nominally Christians; these you will wish to elevate into real and practical Christians. Then too you will see the great mass of those who are really Christians, falling far below the true standard of christian character, set forth in the Gospel, and exhibited in the example of the Saviour; these you will wish to urge onward to the full stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. It may be that you will find those, who will hail you with joy, as the preacher of a liberal faith, whose only idea of liberality is, that it consists in utter indifference or bitter opposition to every thing like serious and earnest devotion to spiritual things. They will listen to you with pleasure, so long as you will contend with those who differ from you, or entertain them with interesting speculations, but will grow indifferent to your appeals, or will turn from you to what they may call more liberal preaching, as soon as you rebuke their

particular sins, and say, thou art the man; these you will seek to awaken to an interest in religion, as the life of the inward man, the joy and peace of the soul. And how are these desirable objects to be accomplished? I answer, by breathing yourself the spirit you wish to have prevail around you. We depend, I think, too much upon the power of intellect, and the strength of argument, and too little upon the silent, but efficient influence of sympathy. A man may argue unanswerably, and persuade most eloquently, from the pulpit, in behalf of a serious and earnest devotion of heart and life to the service of God, and yet he may be so light and trifling in his daily conduct, as to destroy the influence of his public exhortations. I would not have a minister assume a long face, and utter himself in solemn tones, because he is a minister, but I would have him seek, most earnestly, to become, in all respects, what he exhorts his hearers to become. Do you exhort your hearers to seriousness and earnestness in their religious life? Let your exhortations be impressed upon their minds by the thought that you are yourself the serious and earnest Christian you are entreating them to become. Do you urge them on to high attainments in christian goodness? Let your own earnest efforts after high attainments enforce the exhortation you give. Do you commend to your people the various christian graces, meekness, humility, zeal, a government of the passions, a devotion of heart and life to spiritual things? Let the correspondence of your own conduct with your exhortations be the strongest recommendation you give to these virtues and graces. There is a sympathy of heart with heart, through the power of which one earnest, devoted spirit affects the whole mass. Seek then, my brother, to become yourself, in all respects, what, as a christian minister, you exhort others to become, to breathe the spirit you would have others breathe, to exhibit the temper you

would have others exhibit, to live the life you exhort others to lead.

I have confined the hints I have offered, my brother, to three distinct topics,—your pulpit services, your pastoral labors, and your christian character. I have felt, that with this people is your sphere of labor, that this is the portion of Christ's vineyard that is committed to your care, that you are placed here, not that you may look abroad, as from an eminent position, upon the whole world, and labor in every enterprise that may be started for the good of any portion of the family of man, but that you may be instrumental in leading this particular people to Christ, in building up in this place, and in the hearts of those who have asked you to labor among them, the kingdom of the Master you have undertaken to serve. And I have felt that if, among this people, you become the efficient preacher, the successful pastor, and exhibit a christian example worthy of their imitation, you will accomplish more for the cause of Christ than you could in any other way. I have dwelt upon details; for I well remember, that, when I entered the christian ministry, there were many to point out the general principles by which I should be governed, while there were but few, who would aid me in the details of my labors, by furnishing me with the results of their own experience and observation. The hints which I have offered are the promptings of my own experience and observation. You can judge for yourself of their value, and will estimate them according to their worth. And now, my brother, go forth to your work in the spirit of your Master, laboring diligently in your vocation of planting and watering, while you pray fervently that God would give the increase. Go in the exercise of a living faith in the truths you preach, and with unswerving confidence in God. And may his spirit accompany you, and his blessing be upon you!

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP.

BY REV. JOSEPH ANGIER.

It is a pleasant duty, my christian brother, which, at your request, the Council has assigned to me, as the organ of these assembled churches, to welcome you to their fellowship, and to the brotherhood of their ministering servants—and to assure you of the fraternal interest with which we hail your accession to the christian ministry.

The solemn consecration of a young man to the sacred office, is an occasion which appeals, and not all in vain, to the sympathies of every christian heart. And yet, I suppose that very few appreciate,—how can they, to any thing like its full extent,—the thrilling, absorbing interest of the occasion to his own heart. With whatever feelings some may regard these ceremonies of ordination, I know, and these brethren know, that to him who is thus inducted into an office of such solemn responsibility, they are anything but an empty and unmeaning pageant. With whatever sensibility you may heretofore have revolved the various experience that awaits you in this ministry, it bears but a faint comparison with the tumultuous rush of feeling, which seems to crowd the emotional experience of years almost into these few brief but solemn hours. I know that your heart must be full, throbbing,

trembling, aching almost, even while rejoicing, under its burthen of freshly awakened and strangely mingled sensibilities. And, therefore, though my acquaintance with you has been neither long nor intimate, yet be assured, that it is with sympathies, on that account, scarcely less alive, animated by the memory of a similar experience, never to be forgotten, that I proffer to you, in behalf of the churches, and in my own behalf, this right hand, and take you to our christian fellowship and love. Accept it as a sincere expression of our interest and regard,—as a token of the full and cordial sympathy, and trust, with which we receive and welcome you to a participation in the arduous cares and precious rewards of our holy and venerated profession. Receive it as a pledge, that we will ever look with fraternal interest upon your success and happiness—and that so long as you remain true, (as we doubt not you ever will,) to conscience, to Christ, to God, to the souls entrusted to your care, you shall receive from us ready sympathy and aid, in all time of desire and need; and God help us to remember and redeem the pledge.

We congratulate ourselves, my brother, and give thanks to God, that he has put it in your heart, to devote yourself to the ministry of reconciliation. We rejoice in the belief that your heart is in the work, and in the earnest you have already given that you will become a good and faithful minister of Jesus Christ.

And we congratulate *you* also, upon the choice you have made. The office to which you are now set apart, is indeed a laborious and trying one. But its labors and trials are rendered sacred and dear by thoughts of the fellowship to which they introduce us, though unworthy, with the great head of the church, who underwent such labor and anguish, in behalf of a sinful world, who was himself "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

You have counted the cost. You are prepared, I presume, for many and peculiar trials of mind and heart. You anticipate no easy, however grateful task, no holyday pastime, in preparing to meet your people, sabbath after sabbath, with arguments that shall convince, and thoughts that shall interest, animate, and instruct, as well as tones and words to warn, admonish, and reprove. And we cannot assure you, that there will not be moments when your spirit will reel and faint almost under its weight of anxious responsibility. Nor can we cherish for you any very confident hope that your heart shall not often be pained, by the insensibility and caprice of some, for whose benefit, would they but *be* benefited, you would rejoice to spend and be spent, and by the lukewarmness and indifference of others, from whom you may now expect the most hearty sympathy, and the most earnest and steadfast coöperation in the great work which they have invited you to undertake.

But let me not dwell upon the more sombre features of your possible experience, but hasten rather to reverse the picture, and congratulate you upon the privileges and rewards of your profession; for they outweigh, again and again, and still thrice again, all its hardships and sorrows, great and peculiar as they are. You have not erred, my brother, in your estimation of this office, if you have expected to find in it a ministry of joy, and of loftiest satisfactions. First and chief, the thought that it is your especial and daily vocation to study, and think, and toil, and watch, for the good of souls,—for the advancement, not of the perishing interests of time and sense, but of the substantial and enduring interests of the mind and heart,—for the recovery, improvement, and salvation of our spiritual and immortal nature, the object dearest to God, and the office borne and hallowed by the Son, whom the Father sanctified and sent;

this thought has already inspired your heart, and animated it with its quickening and blessed influence. We have only to ask for you that its power shall not abate but strengthen with time and experience, and seldom can you be subject to the dissatisfaction and weariness which must fasten often and long upon the mind which seeks and labors only for the meat that perisheth; the vapid pleasures and cheating glories of this transitory world.

And in the pursuit of this high and beneficent task, it is to be your privilege, every sabbath, to declare from this and other pulpits, the messages of God to his people; to pour into the minds and hearts of your brethren the best thoughts of your own mind, and the deepest, most devout and cherished feelings of your own heart. It is a privilege which we are confident you now prize in some measure as it ought to be prized, as it must be prized, by every one who is not unworthy to direct the thoughts and lead the devotions of a christian assembly. Happy, (and in saying this I trust that I do not violate the spirit, though I may seem to depart somewhat from the form of this service,) thrice happy, if familiarity and use, as they mature your powers, and enrich your resources, and facilitate your labors, increase, instead of diminishing your estimation of this privilege, and your desire and effort to be worthy of it, making full proof of your ministry. Happy, if its influence shall pursue you through every day and hour of the week, attend you in your closet, inspire your devotions, inform and direct your studies, and never entirely forsake you even in the familiar intercourse of daily and social life. Then the pulpit will become indeed your "joy and throne." You will come before your people, rejoicing in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. With whatever sense of feebleness and insufficiency you may sometimes be compelled to perform your public ministrations, there will be no mingling of shame or self-reproach,

from the reflection that you have not duly magnified your office in your preparatory studies and discipline, and daily draughts from the original fount of inspiration. And often, most often, I trust, your heart will glow with gratitude and joy, that you have not unworthily, not all ineffectually spoken upon the theme of the great salvation,—touching chords of piety, enthusiasm, and love, that shall continue to vibrate with happy and blessed emotions, and holy resolutions, long after your voice is silent, and its echo only remains in the deep places of many an earnest, affectionate and penitent heart. I presume, my brother, that you now duly estimate this privilege, and if faithful, you ever will. You will feel it to be reward enough, and more than enough, for whatever toil and anguish of spirit you may sometimes have to undergo, that you are permitted to be a student of God's truth, and its interpreter to the souls of your fellow-men; to be an instrument in his hand, of strengthening their sympathy with spiritual realities—chastening their affections for outward and material things—and increasing their thirst, and quickening their efforts after a more intimate, refined, and spiritual joy.

At the risk of saying more than enough, I will venture to allude, though it must be scarcely more than a *mere* allusion, to one or two other privileges connected with the office you have assumed,—the calm meditative seclusion of the closet,—"the still air of delightful studies" and devotion, in which much of your time must be spent, that you may come to your people here, and at their homes, duly prepared to edify and instruct, showing yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed; and last, not least, the pleasure of free, confiding and affectionate intercourse with the people of your charge, feeling that your relation to each other is one of purest friendship, founded upon no worldly interests, inspired by

no selfish aims, but deriving its birth and nourishment from the objects of your connexion and your mutual interest in the purely spiritual service, which it is your duty and privilege to render, and theirs to receive.

Far be it from me to utter one word of exaggeration, to raise in your heart false and delusive hopes, by asserting aught, which has not been realized in experience. I frankly confess to all the hardships and trials of the pastoral office. They are neither few nor light. And I hope that you will ever find among your people a just appreciation of your intentions, and a considerate regard for your feelings—paying due respect to your views of duty in this relation. But, after all, I can say to you with the utmost confidence, that you will find in the pastoral relation, pleasures and satisfactions, that vastly more than counterbalance all the trials which attend it. And many of these trials, if you suitably improve them, you will find to be blessings in disguise, furnishing that discipline to the heart and character, which is indispensable to the full appreciation and enjoyment of the christian pastor's duties.

I congratulate you, therefore, that you are to go in and out among this people, as their friend and brother,—their friend and brother, in the highest and best sense that attaches to these relations. I can express for you no better wish—I can offer for you and with you, no kinder petition, than that as friends and brethren you may ever love them, even as Christ loved his own,—that like him, if such things must be, you may gently bear with their prejudices, laying not bitterly to heart their caprices, and overlooking and forgiving in them, whatever may seem inconsiderate and unkind;—and that as their christian brother and soul's friend, they may ever regard and cherish *you*, "esteeming you very highly in love for your work's sake," reposing too much confidence in your christian sincerity and fidelity, and cherishing too much

tenderness for your feelings, and too much delicacy and self-respect on their own part, to trouble you or themselves with hasty surmises and captious complaints of disaffection and neglect. With confidence and regard thus mutually preserved and cherished, many and great are the satisfactions that await you in the more familiar and intimate relations of the pastoral office.

And now, my brother, let me trust that it may prove a word in season, both to you and ourselves, if I say to you in the animating words of one, who, in noble and fitting terms, has set forth the spirit and dignity of the office with which you are now clothed, that "the immediate tasks of this profession are clothed with interest far too strong to be expressed in any abstract or formal manner. It is not, to our apprehension, the formal or merely official life, that many are disposed to consider it; it is not merely to solemnize marriages, or to attend funerals, or to pay visits of official condolence, or to pay any other visits of an artificial character; it is not to preach dull sermons, in a dull, hum-drum manner, as if it were a work to be done according to contract. No! in the name of every thing sacred and interesting, let us say no. Let public opinion say no; and demand of this profession all the energies of intellectual and spiritual life. Let clerical practice say no, with a spirit and tone that none can mistake. Let every mind pledged to this office, *leap* to its work, as at the voice of a trumpet,—as at the call of country, and kindred, and brotherhood,—as at the summons-call for all the energy, and enthusiasm, and heroism, that are in human nature. Is there power? Is there gentleness? Is there love? Is there eloquence? Is there an aim soaring to heaven?—This is a sphere for them all; broad, ample, infinite, we were ready to say; but deep, too; deeply searching and interesting, far beyond the measure of all ordinary pursuits.

With this animating view, and thrilling summons, to the duties of the office with which you are now invested, I end my congratulations—once more welcoming you to it, with this symbol of the fellowship, which we alike ask and tender. Welcome to an office, if, in some respects, the most arduous and trying, yet the noblest also, and the most beneficent to which man can be called. Welcome to its peculiar toils and sorrows, rewarded by peculiar and sublime satisfactions!—Welcome, and God bless you! God bless you and this people,—you in them and them in you. May his word, uttered by you in simple earnestness and faith, "in the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," never return unto you void, but abundantly prosper in that whereto it is sent: may you win the hearts of many, yea, *all*, to the love and obedience of Christ, and receive at last the joyful benediction, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

ADDRESS TO THE SOCIETY.

BY REV. FRANCIS CUNNINGHAM.

The minister ordained and admonished of his duties, it is right that the people should now be reminded of theirs. It cannot but be highly gratifying to my feelings, that, through your committee, you should have requested me to address you on this occasion. On many accounts, too, it seems a fit selection. Who should know so well as I of what advice you stand in need; against what faults you are to be warned; what are your peculiar difficulties and dangers?

And yet the very circumstances that point me out as the fit person for the discharge of this duty, tend likewise to embarrass me in the performance of it. We are too well acquainted. There is danger that what I say, may seem to have too close an application to the particular case. And, though we may submit to be told of our faults by our friends, we do not like to be lectured before strangers. It is perhaps well then for me to disclaim, in the outset, any such intention. I propose and wish to divest myself of all special associations with you, and say only what might be equally applicable to any congregation—what is every where and undeniably true. I beg that I may be understood as not making any allusion, in what I shall say, to the past relations between you and me.

1. And in the first place, I think it important every where to guard against an impression, which the exercises of this occasion often have a tendency to create or strengthen, as if the whole responsibility in this relation, were to rest on the minister; as if he were responsible for your souls. Responsible for your souls! Who could be found to undertake the office, if he really had to answer for a single living soul! No, the minister has his duty to perform, and it is a high and solemn duty; but that conscientiously done, he has nothing more to answer for. The rest is for you to do. You must work out your own salvation. Salvation is an individual, personal, work, to be done in the still watches of the night, in your hours of reflection, in your daily thoughts, a work to be lived. It will not do for you to ascribe your coldness, indifference, want of devotion, to your minister. It may be in some part his fault, but it is far more yours. He cannot pray for you. He cannot think for you. He cannot *live* for you. He can sow the seed, but it is for you to water and protect, and bring the fruit to perfection. He can lead you to the fountain of living water, but he cannot make you drink.

This, then, is the first thing to be urged upon you. Do not let any thing, or every thing, that has been said here to-day, mislead you for a moment into thinking that you are to be saved by another's means. You have a great, a momentous, work to do for yourself. It is very possible that a new voice may give you a new impulse. It may be that this is a new call of God's providence upon you, to lead more than ever a religious life, to secure a religious faith. You ought to look upon it as such. What new relation can be entered into, without bringing with it new thoughts of duty and responsibility, to those who think at all! But still it is only an impulse—only an invitation. It is for you to obey—to accept it.

2. And I am thus led naturally to say, in the second place, that neither, in other respects, must you expect *all* from your minister. His good influence, every where depends upon, and must be limited by, your coöperation. In much of what has been said here to-day, this must have occurred to you. The duties enjoined upon him, have all of them a corresponding duty, which might be enjoined on you. But I need not enter into the detail. Let me, however, dwell for a little, on one thing. You must not expect to find your minister without his faults. He is but a man, and like other men must have his imperfections. Nay! must have them as the very consequence, the reverse side, the shadow, I may say, of his virtues. I mean that those very qualities which you like in him, must involve, (for it lies in human nature,) some deficiencies. A man cannot be every thing at once. And thus we find in ministers, that some are eminent in the pulpit, and some in the parlor: some are distinguished for eloquence, and some for goodness: some are bold and independent, at the occasional risk of giving offence, and others, by their caution, preserve a happy and beneficial influence. I do not say that it is impossible that these different good qualities should be united. I only say that it is not to be expected. You must try to appreciate what you have paid for. It is to be remembered that, in inducing your minister to enter into this relation with you, rather than others which he might have formed, you have assumed a responsibility towards him. You are bound to make the best of him. You must guard against the weakness of expecting from him, what he never promised, and what you never saw. Try to look rather at his excellencies than his deficiencies. Do not measure him by any received standard, but feel that there may be different ways of usefulness; nor become dissatisfied that the man of your choice is what you chose, and not another.

3. But the great point of all, and that upon which the permanence of the connexion between a minister and his people, more than upon any thing, depends, still remains to be urged. It is, that you *become acquainted with him.* This I know you will at once respond to. "Yes! it is that we want. A man who will be one of us: who will visit us day by day, and share with us our pleasures and our pains; to whom we can go confidently, and with whom we can take sweet counsel." All this is very desirable, no doubt, but it is not yet what I mean. It is not acquaintance. You may go in and out, and meet and talk with your minister for years; you may come here weekly, and listen to his words, and yet not really know him. You are not acquainted with him, till you know, and can share his thoughts. True acquaintance is of the mind. True interest is of spirit in spirit. You may be in closest contact with a man, and yet separated, for all purposes of real acquaintance, as if by oceans.

But how then become thus acquainted? Of course, partly and naturally, by familiar, personal, intercourse. This will at least prepare the way for the true acquaintance. A friendly feeling opens the ears to understand the voice of the preacher. But the great condition of perfect acquaintance, is that which I have already urged upon you. I mean personal cultivation and development; and especially religious cultivation and development. Without effort for this object, on your part, you will become more and more strangers to each other, instead of better acquainted. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." And just in proportion as your minister is true to his duty, will this be the case. For if he is cultivating daily his religious sense, taking lessons of God's great providence, and listening to God's voice within him, he will go forward; he will be in progress, while you remain stationary. At this moment, it is

to be supposed, that there is a degree of correspondence between you. He has, it is to be presumed, spoken to your hearts, and your hearts have hailed his word, and you have prayed him to remain among you. Take heed that he does not grow strange to you, or you to him. Come hither, prepared to listen, with your whole hearts and minds. Strive to go onward with him. Let him not go up into the mount alone, lest he come back with his face shining, and, out of regard to your fears, be obliged to put a veil upon it.

But I fear that I am trespassing on the time allotted to me. May-be I have already said too much. And yet I had many things still to say. There are several points of mere external observance, which I think every society needs occasionally to be reminded of. Yet, after all, it is needless to insist on them, if only you take the spirit of what I have been saying. Be truly acquainted with your minister, acquainted with his thought, and in love with it, and you will need no monitor to be all he could wish. His words will have an attraction you cannot resist. The recurring sabbath will be a holiday to you, and you will hang upon his lips, as on the lips of an angel. Any thing you can do for his convenience and comfort, will be done with alacrity, and the good seed he sows in your hearts will spring up, and bear fruit, some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred fold.

And now, my friends, I bid you God speed. I said that I should endeavor, in speaking to you, to lay aside the consciousness of our past connexion with each other, and to speak as I would to any other people. But could I do it? Is it possible? You, with whom, and for whom, I so long have prayed—with whom, for years, I have shared sorrows, joys, thoughts—could I stand among you, even for these few moments, as a stranger! It cannot be. We are no strangers, nor ever can be. Providence leads

men into new and unforeseen relations, but, once entered into, their influence upon us is enduring. The past is eternal, as well as the future. You are different, for your connexion with me, from what you would have been, and I, for my connexion with you. Then, as your once-minister, and always-friend, in memory of that hour, not so long past, in which I stood here, and the blessing of heaven was invoked upon our connexion, let me pray God to bless you in this new one. May it prove all you anticipate! You do not need any further admonition from me. I have said what I thought most needed. I know that in essentials you will be a kind and a grateful people. God grant that you may find, in this new relation, the food your souls need: that they may grow into full strength, and be prepared for the trials of this life, and the progress of that we look forward to. "The Lord bless you, and keep you. The Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace!"

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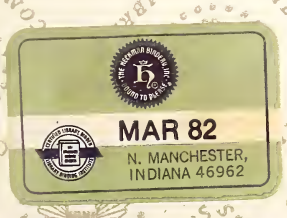
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